

Always the visionary, he began several initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for inmates while housed at the jail. These initiatives include the Veterans Dorm, the Fatherhood Dorm, and the GED Dorm.

The Veterans Dorm was the first such initiative in the country and provided vast resources for those Veterans who were incarcerated. It helped them to deal with the ever-present issues of PTSD and substance abuse. In short, this initiative helped to prepare these Veterans for life after incarceration.

The Fatherhood Dorm initiative focused on inmates being able to be present fathers after their release from incarceration. This initiative focused on improving the literacy of fathers so that after their release they would have the literacy skills to better themselves and to be able to read to their children. Finally, the GED Dorm helped incarcerated individuals to obtain their GED's.

Because of these initiatives and his focus of Mental Health, Lt. Col Darr was responsible for the removal of a Federal Consent Decree that the jail had operated under since 1999.

Lt. Col Darr's remarkable service as Sheriff ended in 2016. He always looked for ways to help himself and his community. He came back at the Lt. Col for jail operations under current Muscogee County Sheriff Greg Countryman.

John Darr has held many titles in his life, but the most befitting is that of Servant. It has been said that "Service is the rent that we pay for the space that we occupy here on this earth." John Darr has paid his rent and he has paid it well.

Lt. Col Darr has accomplished much in this life, but none of it would have been possible with the love and support of his wife Linda and their four children: Rachael, Michelle, Courtney and Troy.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join my wife Vivian and me along with the more than 765,000 people of Georgia's Second Congressional District in extending our sincerest appreciation and best wishes to Lt. Col John Darr on the occasion of his retirement from the Muscogee County Sheriff's Office and remarkable career in Law Enforcement. To God be the Glory.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY HAL PECK

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 27, 2023

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all South Carolinians, I am grateful to wish World War II veteran, Mr. Harold (Hal) Peck, a happy 100th birthday.

Mr. Hal Peck, was born on February 22, 1923 in Shelbyville, Indiana. In the spring of 1943, he was drafted and made his way across the Atlantic, arriving in Normandy on June 17th, eleven days after D-Day, with the area having been secured. As a member of the 226th Signal Corps, he was a "climber," responsible for going up and down telephone poles to help keep the lines of communication intact. He did not carry a rifle while on pole duty, as he could not be perceived as a threat. The only shots he's taken, says Mr. Peck, deal with basketball.

After his wartime experience, he was recruited by one of his former high school bas-

ketball coaches to play for Tulane University, in New Orleans. At 5-foot-eight, he excelled in college basketball, and was asked by the National Basketball League Commissioner, Dovie Moore, to play on one of the National League teams. He declined the offer and instead decided to coach basketball in a little town in northern Indiana, Kewanna. After 5 years of coaching, he went on to become a successful businessman as an insurance salesman and executive.

In 1949, Mr. Hal Peck, married his Tulane sweetheart, the former Gwen Bailie. They had a happy marriage of 60 years, filled with adventure, having traveled to almost every country, with Goshen, Indiana as their home base. In 1992, they retired to Aiken, South Carolina. Hal and Gwen had 2 sons, Rich and Josh Peck, who we join in celebrating their father's birthday.

I also join the family and friends of Mr. Peck in congratulating him for the French Legion of Honor which he was awarded by the French government in October of 2022 for his service during the war. It is the highest distinction, rewarding eminent military and civil merits, that can be conferred in France on a French citizen as well as on a foreigner.

Today, I honor Mr. Hal Peck for his service to the American people and wish him a happy 100th birthday and the best in his future endeavors.

HONORING THE EXTRAORDINARY ACHIEVEMENTS OF CLIFTON WHARTON, JR.

HON. ELISSA SLOTKIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 27, 2023

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in honor of a man who has spent his entire life and career breaking racial barriers and paving the way for future generations of Black scholars and leaders. The name Clifton Wharton Jr. is known by many in the Michigan State University community thanks to a prominent campus landmark: the Wharton Center for the Performing Arts. But in addition to his name, I want them to know his story, as it features a persistent rise against the odds, a tale worthy of being staged inside the building that now bears his name.

By the time Clifton Wharton Jr. became president of Michigan State University—the first African-American to head a major, predominantly white university in the United States—he was no stranger to being first. Wharton, who grew up in Boston, entered Harvard University at age 16. There he became the first Black announcer at the campus radio station and the first Black secretary of the National Student Association, a lobbying group he founded. Later, he was the first African-American admitted to Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies and the first African-American to earn a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Chicago. He worked for about a decade with the Agriculture Development Council, a non-governmental agency, before returning to the academic world.

When the MSU trustees appointed him the University's 14th president in 1969, it was a time of tremendous change and cultural up-

heaval for the country, with college campuses taking center stage in the civil rights movement and protests over the Vietnam War. Against that tumultuous backdrop, Wharton set another first: unlike any other major university president of the time, he supported students who demanded that their concerns be heard, even offering to personally take student petitions against the war to Michigan's Congressional delegation in Washington, D.C.

Wharton's eight-year tenure at MSU's helm was marked by his successful efforts to maintain the quality of the University's academic programs in the face of major budget cuts, his commitment to serving underprivileged students, and the integration of the College of Osteopathic Medicine with the other medical schools. In 1978, Wharton achieved another first when he stepped down from MSU to become the chancellor for the State University of New York system, making him the first African American leader of the nation's largest university system.

But he wasn't done breaking barriers. In 1987, he was named the president and CEO of the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association-College Retirement Equities Fund, making him the first Black CEO of a Fortune 500 company. He held that role until 1993, when he became Deputy Secretary of State under President Bill Clinton, not surprisingly, the first African American to ever hold this second highest foreign policy post.

I salute Dr. Wharton for his groundbreaking career and the path of excellence he has blazed.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF ANTHONY RAMOS

HON. RASHIDA TLAIB

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 27, 2023

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, today I want to recognize the many contributions of Anthony Ramos, a long-time community leader and resident of Dearborn in Michigan's 12th District, as we mourn his loss.

Anthony was a beloved community youth basketball coach and co-founder of the Dearborn Basketball Association, where he also served as vice president. He saw the community's need for affordable sports programming for young people and was moved to act. Anthony's love for the game inspired enthusiasm in the young people he coached. He instilled the values of good sportsmanship and importance of teamwork while teaching the fundamentals.

Please join me in honoring the life of Mr. Anthony Ramos and extending condolences to the Ramos family as the 12th Congressional District honors his life and legacy.

HONORING LEGENDARY EDUCATOR DR. EVA EVANS

HON. ELISSA SLOTKIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 27, 2023

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor a legend of Lansing, Michigan whose

tireless advocacy on behalf of effective education for students of color changed the trajectory of hundreds of young lives in mid-Michigan.

Dr. Eva Evans was born in Memphis, Tennessee, and grew up in Detroit, Michigan, where she attended Northern High School in the early 1950s. Former teachers and fellow students remember her as one of the most willing, giving and compassionate people they'd ever met, traits that would ultimately define her entire life of service. She went on to earn her Bachelor of Science degree from Wayne State University and both Master's and Doctorate degrees from Michigan State University.

Dr. Evans served in a number of administrative positions in the Lansing School District, from Director of Elementary Education to Deputy Superintendent of Schools—the first female to ever hold that position. As a leader in the school system, she developed and implemented innovative programs, such as schools of choice and a district-wide talent fair for students and staff. She connected the school district with Lansing Community College and Michigan State University for the 2+2+2 Program, which channels minority students into MSU's College of Engineering. While she had a particular passion for math and science, she also created the "Be a Star" performing arts program. These programs and partnerships have endured over the years, benefiting countless individuals and shaping practice and policy in education, health care, social services and beyond.

Outside the school buildings, Dr. Eva Evans tirelessly devoted herself to dozens of causes, giving of herself in leadership roles. She was the 24th International President of Alpha Kappa Alpha, the chair of the Lansing Community College Foundation, President of the Lansing Woman's Club, and Grand Marshall of the African American Parade and Family Picnic in Lansing. Evans was also appointed by the governor to serve on the Michigan Council for the Humanities and was Chairman of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights. She championed causes with the American Red Cross and created programs to raise awareness of HIV and AIDS. I like to think of her as the great connector—connecting underprivileged students to education beyond high school, connecting communities in need to programs that had the capacity to help, and simply connecting people to one another.

Dr. Evans, who passed away in 2020, received numerous honors in her adopted hometown of Lansing, including the YWCA's Diana Award for Excellence in Education; the NAACP's Educator of the Year; the Lansing Chamber of Commerce's Athena Award; the Crystal Apple Award for Education from Michigan State University, and the Applause Award from the Lansing Center for the Arts. But I believe the greatest honor and the most profound title she ever received was to be called a teacher.

COMMEMORATING THE VICTIMS OF THE SUMGAIT POGROM

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 27, 2023

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the po-

grom against the Armenian residents of the town of Sumgait, Azerbaijan. Beginning on February 27, 1988, and over the course of three days, Azerbaijani mobs assaulted and killed Armenians. The violence left dozens of Armenian civilians dead and hundreds injured, women and girls were raped, and some victims were burned alive after being tortured and beaten. Thousands were forced to flee their homes, leaving behind their belongings. Armenian homes and businesses were left to be looted and destroyed.

The pogroms came about as the result of years of hateful, racist anti-Armenian propaganda woven into the very fabric of Azerbaijani society by Azerbaijani leaders, who made little effort to punish those responsible, instead attempting to cover up the atrocities in Sumgait and denying the government's role in instigating the killings. This unprovoked violence against Armenians was a precursor to subsequent attacks on ethnic Armenians, including the pogroms in Kirovabad, Baku, and the Maragha Massacre.

Time has not healed the wounds of those victimized in the pogroms or their families because three decades later, Azerbaijan's aggression against the people of Armenia and Artsakh continues.

Beginning on September 27, 2020, and over 44 days, Azerbaijani forces once again targeted and murdered innocent Armenians in Artsakh and displaced tens of thousands more. Azerbaijan's violence again escalated in September of 2022, when Azeri forces shelled homes in the villages of Karmir Shuka and Taghavard in Artsakh and launched an unprovoked assault on sovereign Armenian territory.

Today, Azerbaijan continues to terrorize the people of Artsakh by blocking the Lachin Corridor—the only road connecting Artsakh to Armenia. Since the blockade on December 12, 2022, the humanitarian crisis in Artsakh has grown more dire by the day, with widespread shortages of food, medicine and other necessities and rolling blackouts amid freezing temperatures. The effect has been devastating to the 120,000 individuals living in Artsakh, including children and the elderly.

These are the horrific consequences when aggression and hatred grow unchecked and when Aliyev's hostility is met with deafening silence, emboldening him to continue, and expand, his unprovoked attacks on the Armenian people, knowing there will be no repercussions. This is why Azerbaijan considers it acceptable to annihilate Armenians in their historical homeland. We cannot allow violence and crimes against humanity to go unanswered.

The United States must immediately and permanently stop all U.S. assistance to Azerbaijan and impose sanctions. It must also direct U.S. humanitarian assistance to Artsakh, call for the safe and unconditional release of the remaining Armenian prisoners of war and captured civilians, hold Azerbaijan accountable for the destruction of religious and cultural sites, and support democracy in Armenia and a free, independent Artsakh.

On this tragic anniversary, as we pause to remember the innocent victims of the pogroms, we are also reminded that despite the trials the Armenian people have faced, it has not broken their faith, determination, and their will to survive in the face of constant threats from Azerbaijan. Today, let us recommit our-

selves to doing everything we can to bring liberation to our Armenian brothers and sisters abroad, once and for all.

COMMENDING NICHOLAS AYERS ON HIS WORK FOR ALABAMA DISTRICT ONE

HON. JERRY L. CARL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 27, 2023

Mr. CARL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Nicholas Ayers for his service to Alabama's First Congressional District. A Virginia native, Nicholas graduated from George Mason University, where he also received his Master of Public Administration. Nicholas has been on the Hill for nearly six years and has dedicated his time serving for the U.S. House of Representatives. Starting off as a Legislative Intern, Nicholas researched information about legislation and issues which affected that district. He was then promoted to Staff Assistant, Legislative Correspondent, Legislative Aid, and then I hired him on as my Legislative Assistant. His extensive knowledge of health care made him an asset to my office, and I know wherever he goes next, he will continue to be a leader. We wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

HONORING THE LIFE AND CAREER OF LANSING'S OWN EARVIN "MAGIC" JOHNSON

HON. ELISSA SLOTKIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 27, 2023

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to one of the greatest basketball players of all time, a man who brought so much magic to the game it quite literally became part of his name. And it all began in Michigan's capital city of Lansing—his hometown.

To say that Earvin "Magic" Johnson came from humble roots is an understatement. His mother was a school janitor and his father worked the General Motors assembly line by day, and collected garbage in the evenings. Johnson would often help his father on the garbage route, earning him the nickname "Garbage Man" with the neighborhood kids. But all the teasing ended when he hit the basketball court. Johnson started playing as a youngster, and by the time he graduated from Lansing Everett High School—where he led his team to a state championship and was dubbed "Magic"—he was already considered the greatest high school basketball player to ever come out of Michigan. He moved just down the road to East Lansing, attending Michigan State University where he became a two-time All-American, leading the Spartans to the 1979 National Championship while being voted the Most Outstanding Player of that year's Final Four. He was the number one overall selection of the 1979 NBA draft, chosen by the Los Angeles Lakers where he would go on to play for his entire professional career.

The stats are dazzling: in his 13 seasons with the Lakers, Johnson was a key member